

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2023

Remarks to the Parliament in Ottawa, Canada

March 24, 2023

President Biden. Good afternoon. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Good afternoon. *Bonjour*, Canada. *[Laughter]*

I must tell you, I took 4 years of French in school. *[Laughter]* First time I attempted to make a speech in French, I was laughed at. *[Laughter]* So that's as good as I can get right now.

But seriously, thank you very, very much.

Speaker of the House of Commons, Speaker of the Senate, Members of the Parliament, thank you for the very kind welcome to my wife and I.

Prime Minister Trudeau, you were my first meeting with a foreign leader, just 1 month after my Presidency during the hardest days of COVID-19. We had to make a visit virtual, but since then, we've been all over the world, talking to some—taking on some of the toughest issues our nations have faced in a very long time.

I want to thank you for your partnership and for your personal friendship. I thank you very much. Jill and I are grateful for the hospitality that you and Sophie have shown us.

And, ladies and gentlemen, I'm honored to have the opportunity to uphold a tradition carried out by so many of my predecessors in addressing the hallowed halls of the Canadian democracy. Although this is a different hall. *[Laughter]* You've done a hell of a job here. *[Laughter]* This is really beautiful. *[Laughter]* It's really very beautiful.

This is a custom that speaks to the closeness of our relationship. Americans and Canadians are two people, two countries, in my view, sharing one heart. It's a personal connection. No two nations on Earth are bound by such close ties: friendship, family, commerce, and culture.

Our labor unions cross borders. So do our sports leagues: baseball, basketball, hockey. Listen to this: hockey. *[Laughter]* I have to say, I like your teams except the Leafs. *[Laughter]* I'll tell you why. No, I'll tell you why. I'll tell you why.

Audience members. Boo!

President Biden. They beat the Flyers back in January. That's why. *[Laughter]* And if I didn't see that—I married a Philly girl—if I didn't say that, I'd be sleeping alone, fellas. I like you, but not that much. *[Laughter]*

It can be easy to take a partnership between Canada and the United States as a given. And—but when you stop and think about it, it's really a wonder. Five-thousand-five-hundred-fifty-two-mile-long border—more than 8,800 kilometers—defined by peaceful commerce. Trading relationships that measure more than \$2.5 billion a day.

Every day, hundreds of thousands of people cross the borders, going north and south, to work or just to visit, knowing they'll find a warm welcome on the other side of the border.

Americans love Canadians, and that's not hyperbole. It's a data-driven fact. Earlier this week, the Gallup poll did a new poll showing American opinions on different countries in the world. This is a fact. Canada ranked at the very top. Eighty-eight percent favorable rating among Americans, up from eighty-seven the year before. I take credit for that one point. *[Laughter]*

I suspect every politician in this room would do a hell of a lot to get those kind of numbers.
[Laughter]

But there's a reason for it. The same fundamental aspirations reverberate across both our nations, from the Atlantic to the Pacific. To live in freedom, not just freedom, but live in freedom with dignity—with dignity. To relentlessly pursue the possibilities of tomorrow. To leave our children and our grandchildren a future that's better because of our efforts—the people in this room and a similar room in the United States.

President Kennedy said and—when he spoke here in 1961—and I quote—he said, "Ours is the unity of equal and independent nations, covenants of the same continent, heirs of the same legacy, and fully sovereign associates in the same historic endeavor: to preserve freedom for ourselves and [for] all who wish it." For all who wish it.

Through more than a century of that historic endeavor, Canada and the United States have had each other's backs. In war and in peace, we have been the stronghold of liberty. A safeguard for the fundamental freedoms that give us our—our lives—literally give our lives meaning.

We have gladly stepped into the responsibilities of global leadership because we understand all that is at risk for Canadians and Americans alike when freedom is under attack anywhere in the world.

Today, our destinies are intertwined, and they are inseparable, not because of the inevitability of geography, but because it's a choice, a choice we've made again and again.

The United States chooses to link our future to—with Canada because we know that we'll find no better partner—and I mean this from the bottom of my heart—no more reliable ally, no more steady friend.

And today I say to you, and to all the people of Canada, that you will always, always be able to count on the United States of America. I guarantee it. Together—[applause]. Together, we have built a partnership that is an incredible advantage to both our nations.

That doesn't mean we never disagree, as any two countries will do from time to time. But when we disagree, we solve our differences in friendship and in good will, because we both understand our interests are fundamentally aligned.

And as we stand at this inflection point in history—I had a professor who once explained an inflection point as: You're going down the highway at 60 miles an hour, and you rapidly turn in one direction 5 degrees; you never get back on the same path again, but—but—you're on a different course—where the decisions we make in the coming years will determine the course of our world for decades to come. It happens every five or six generations, but we're at that point.

Nothing gives me greater confidence in the future than knowing Canada and the United States stand together still. Today I'd like to speak to a little bit about the future, if I may, a future that's ours to seize.

You know, I get criticized at home sometimes for saying that—I used to always—Barack—President Obama used to always kid me because I'd always say to him in our private meetings, "A country is never more optimistic than its President or its leaders." Well, I have never been more optimistic in my life about the prospects for—I really mean this, from the bottom of my heart. We're so well—a future built around our shared responsibilities, prosperity, security, shared values.

First, it's a future built on shared prosperity, where Canada and the United States continue to anchor the most competitive, prosperous, and resilient economic region in the world. That's a

fact. That's just a fact. Where our supply chains are secure and reliable from end to end because we're creating the value at every step right here in North America.

We're mining we're—critical minerals to manufacturing and packaging of the most advanced semiconductors in the world, to producing electric vehicles and clean energy technologies together.

A future where we understand that economic success is not in conflict with the rights and dignity of workers or meeting our responsibilities addressing the climate crisis, but rather those things depend on us doing that. Depend on us doing that. Factually.

Since becoming President, I've been laser-focused on rebuilding the U.S. economy from the bottom up and the middle out. Not a whole lot trickled down from the top down at my dad's kitchen table. And by the way, when the middle class does well, the wealthy do very well. No one gets hurt.

And the United States made historic—and to the chagrin of some of our critics in the press—bipartisan investments in infrastructure—innovation that are already bringing together and delivering concrete benefits to the American people.

And we—you know, as we implement these legislative achievements, there are enormous opportunities for Canada and the United States to work even closer together to create good-paying jobs in both our countries.

The Inflation Reduction Act—which I admit wasn't bipartisan, but nonetheless, all of the sudden, I'm finding we have more adherents—[laughter]—represents the single largest commitment in tackling climate in our history. As a matter of fact, the single largest investment in all of human history.

And it's going to spur clean energy investments all over the world.

And explicitly—explicitly—it includes tax credits for electric vehicles assembled in Canada, recognizing—[applause]—there's a simple reason—recognizing how interconnected our auto industries are and our workers are.

I am the most pro-union President ever—America has ever had. [Applause] No, no. And I speak to a hell of a lot of Canadian union members.

Look, this is the middle—this is a model for future cooperation, with both our nations investing at home to increase the strength of our industrial bases, making sure that products manufactured in North America are not only manufactured, but they're the best in the world.

You know, we're going to amplify our shared commitment to climate action while growing our economies. If I could just stop for just a second and say: You know, when I announced for President, I was always known as one of those kind of green Republicans—Democrats, and Republicans used to be the same, in my place. Well, guess what? I didn't announce my environmental plan, and I was getting beat up. "Why is Biden all of a sudden changing?"

Well, the reason is, I brought all the unions together. I brought them into the White House. Not a joke. Because they all said, "We're going to lose our jobs." And I pointed out: Guess what? Every single solitary initiative required to deal with the environment creates union jobs. Creates thousands of jobs. Thousands of jobs.

For example, I met with the IBEW and pointed out we're going to build 5,500 [500,000; White House correction] electric charging stations. Guess who builds them? [Laughter] Union workers.

So, look, we're coordinating the standard for new electric vehicles and charging stations so that Americans and Canadians can continue to easily cross the border without ever hitting a snag in their American- or Canadian-built auto—zero-emission vehicles. Moreover, we're going to build batteries and technologies that go into those vehicles together.

We've learned the hard way during the pandemic that when we rely on just-in-time supply chains the circle—that circle the globe, there are significantly—significant vulnerabilities to disruptions and delays. And it drives up costs here at home, to both Canada and the United States.

But there's a better way. Our nations are blessed with incredible natural resources. Canada in particular has large quantities of critical minerals that are essential for our clean energy future—for the world's clean energy future.

And I believe we have an incredible opportunity to work together so Canada and the United States can source and supply here in North America everything we need for reliable and resilient supply chains.

Folks—[applause]. And, folks, to help make our critical mineral supply chains the envy of the world, the United States is making funding available under the Defense Production Act to incentivize American and Canadian companies to responsibly mine and process critical minerals needed for electric vehicles and stationary storage batteries.

We're also building integrated supply chains for our semiconductors, the critical computer chip that, I might note, was invented in America and then we lost control of it. We not only controlled them, but we lost producing them. And that power so much of our daily lives.

The IB plant—the IBM plant in Bromont, Quebec, is the largest semiconductor packaging and testing facility in North America. Chips made in Vermont—chips made in Vermont and Upstate New York are shipped to Bromont to be packaged into electronic components. But now Bromont is expanding with the support of the Canadian Government, and there's going to be a lot more work to do.

Thanks to the bipartisan CHIPS and Science Act I signed into law last year, companies are breaking ground for new semiconductor plants across the United States, representing billions of dollars of new investments in American high-tech manufacturing.

Twelve billion dollars from Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company in Arizona. Twenty billion dollars and counting from Intel in Ohio. One hundred billion dollars in New York, the single largest investment of its kind ever in the world.

When chips begin to roll off these new production lines in America, a lot of them are going to be coming to Canada to be packaged. And that's a lot of jobs, good-paying jobs.

And today—[applause]. And today I'm also making available, through the Defense Production Act, \$50 million to incentivize more U.S. and Canadian companies to invest in packaging semiconductors and printed circuit boards.

Look, that brings me to a second pillar of our future, because of—our shared prosperity is deeply connected to our shared security. In the past—and the past years have proven that Canada and the United States are not insulated from the challenges that impact the rest of the world. The world needs Canada and the United States working together with our partners around the world to rally strong and effective global action.

Nowhere is that more obvious than our united response to Russia's brutal aggression against Ukraine. We've stood together—[applause]. We have stood together to defend sovereignty, to defend democracy, to defend freedom for ourselves and all who wish it.

As I told President Zelenskyy when I visited with him in Kyiv last month, people all over the world are with the brave people of Ukraine. And you have to ask yourself: Aren't you amazed of the personal bravery they're showing? It's incredible. It's incredible. And, folks, I know there's a large Ukrainian diaspora here in Canada—not just the lovely lady we were all introduced to a moment ago—who feel the same way.

Canada and the United States, together with a coalition of 50 nations we've jointly worked to put together, are making sure that Ukraine can defend itself. We're supplying air defense systems, artillery systems, ammunition, armored vehicles, tanks, and so much more. Tens of billions of dollars so far.

Together with our G-7 partners, we're imposing significant costs on Russia as well, denying Russia critical inputs for its war machine. We're independently holding Russia accountable for the war crimes and crimes against humanity that Russia is committing and continues to commit as I speak today. And Canada and America alike have opened their arms to Ukrainian refugees.

Our people know well the high price of freedom. Our Peace Tower—your Peace Tower stands testament to the sacrifices of more than 60,000 brave Canadians who perished in World War I, forever making this nation a champion of liberty.

And the words of a Canadian poet, Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae, still call to us from Flanders Field, echoing their charge through the ages. And I quote it: To you from falling—from failing—excuse me—"To you from failing hands we throw the torch [to you] to hold it high."

So today let's once more affirm that we're going to keep that torch of liberty burning brightly and support the Ukrainian people. We'll not waver. Putin was certain he would have been able to break NATO by now. He was certain of that. But guess what? His lust for land and power has failed thus far. The Ukrainian people love of their country is going to prevail.

In the face of President Putin's aggression against Ukraine, Canada and the United States are also making clear our commitment to our NATO allies. We'll keep our alliance strong and united. We'll defend every inch of NATO territory. An attack against one is an attack against all.

And as we look forward to the 75th anniversary of NATO next year, Canada and the United States share a responsibility and a commitment to make sure NATO can deter any threat, defend against any aggression from anyone. That's the bedrock of the security of both our nations.

Canada and the United States are not only partners in the transatlantic security, we are Pacific nations as well. Earlier this month, we held our first U.S.-Canadian Indo-Pacific Dialogue to deepen our cooperation in the vital region to promote an Indo-Pacific is—that's free and open and prosperous and secure.

We're also an Arctic nation. We both recognize the critical importance of this region to our collective security and the interest of other nations, all of the sudden, in the Arctic. We're working in close coordination to the—to steward and protect the northernmost reaches of our world.

And we're—we are American nations, deeply invested in ensuring that the Western Hemisphere is peaceful, prosperous, democratic, and secure. And that starts with our commitment to defending our people and our own sovereign territory.

NORAD is the only binational military command in the world. NORAD is the only binational military command in the world. Yet another way in which our partnership is exceptional. It is an incredible symbol of the faith we have in one another and the trust we place in each other's capabilities.

Soon, NORAD will have a new next-generation, over-the-horizon radars to enhance our early warning capacity, upgraded undersea surveillance systems, modernized infrastructure that is necessary to host the most advanced aircraft.

And I'm looking forward to continuing to work in close partnership with Canada as we deliver on these needs so that our people can continue to rest soundly knowing NORAD is in the watch. Folks—[*applause*]*—they are.*

And we're also coordinating closely to take on the human security challenges throughout the region. We're working in partnership with our—the people of Haiti to try to find ways to provide security, humanitarian assistance, and to help strengthen Haiti's stability.

We're tackling the scourge of synthetic drugs that are devastating Canada and American communities, particularly our young people. Fentanyl is a killer. The most—and almost everyone knows someone who has been affected by this, lost a child or lost a friend.

Canada and the United States are working closely with our partner, Mexico, to attack this problem at every stage, from the precursor chemicals shipped from overseas, to the powders, to the pills, to the traffickers moving into all of our countries.

And we all know synthetic opioid epidemic has its roots around the globe, not just here. So today we're announcing a commitment to build a new global coalition of likeminded countries, led by Canada and the United States, to tackle this crisis. This is about public health. This is about public health.

It's about public health, our economic futures, our national security.

We're also working together to address the record levels of migration in the hemisphere. The Los Angeles Declaration on Migration and Protection, which the United States and Canada signed last June, along with 19 other nations, represents an integrated new approach to the migration challenge, which is real, one that unites humane policies that both secure borders and support people.

In the United States, we're expanding legal pathways for migration to seek safety in humanitarian—on a humanitarian basis, while discouraging unlawful migration that feeds exploitation and human trafficking.

So today I applaud China for stepping up—or, excuse me—I applaud Canada—[*laughter*]*—I'm—you can tell what I'm thinking—[laughter]—about China. I won't get into that yet. I applaud Canada for stepping up with similar programs, opening new legal pathways for 1,500 [15,000; White House correction] migrants to come to Canada from countries in the Western Hemisphere.*

At the same time, the United States and Canada will work together to discourage unlawful border crossings and fully implement in the updated Safe Third Country Agreement.

Finally, as we advance our shared prosperity and security, we must never lose sight of our shared values, because our values are literally the lynchpin holding everything else together. Welcoming refugees and seeking—asylum seekers is a part of who Canadians and Americans are.

In fact, the United States recently launched a new private sponsorship program for refugees—we call it "Welcome Corps"—which draws Canadian—on Canadians' decades of leadership in refugee resettlement. We're both countries built upon the nation-to-nation relationship with Native Americans and First Nations. We've both been influenced and strengthened by the contributions of generation of immigrants.

We believe to our core that every single person deserves to live in dignity, safety, and rise as high as their dreams can carry them. We strive to defend human rights, to advance equality and gender equality, to pursue justice, and uphold the rule of law.

I want to note the outstanding work Canada has done to build a coalition of nearly 70 countries endorsing the Declaration Against Arbitrary Detention in State-to-State Relations. It's not only a statement of values. Our citizens are not bargaining chips. They're not diplomatic leverage. They're human beings with lives and families that must be respected.

And I'm very glad to see the two Michaels—[*applause*]*—the two Michaels—Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig—are safely back with their families, after more than 1,000 days—1,000 days—in detention. If my mother were here, she'd say, "God bless you both." Thank you for joining us today. And thank you for having an opportunity to meet you earlier.*

You know, the incredible diversity that defines each of our nations is our strength. And the—Prime Minister Trudeau and I know this is a belief that you and I share. We've both built administrations that look like America and look like Canada. I'm very proud that both of us have Cabinets that are 50 percent women for the first time in history.

Even if you don't agree, guys, I'd stand up. [*Laughter*] We took the lesson from you. Because the bottom line is this: When we make it easier for historically unrepresented and underserved communities to dream, to create, and to succeed, we build a better future for all our people. So let's continue the work.

Where there are no barriers, things look better. Where there are barriers to equal opportunity, we've got to tear them down. Where inequity stifles potential, where we unleash the full power of our people. Where injustice holds sway, let's insist on justice being done.

Those are the shared values that imbue all of our efforts, our very democracy, our vitality, and our vibrancy. You know, it's what seems—it drives us all. Some places and some persons are kind of forgetting what the essence of democracy is. We have to reach—it's what allows us to reach beyond the horizon.

Let me close with this. The year after President Kennedy spoke in Canada's Parliament, he delivered a famous speech at Rice University, issuing a challenge for Americans to go to the Moon in a decade's time.

And you remember what he said. You probably do, because we had to learn it when we were in school. "We choose to go to the Moon in this decade and do other things, not because [it's] easy, but because they are hard, because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept, one that we're" willing—"unwilling to postpone, and one which . . . we [will] win."

That speech tapped into something deep in America's character, something powerful: a belief that we can do big things. If you'll hold a second, just think about it. Turn on the television the last 2 years, whether it's in your country or mine—after 2 years of COVID, people are beginning to wonder, "Can we still do big things?" Big things. We sure in hell can. [*Laughter*]

That confidence—I believe with every fiber in my being that confidence can make the most audacious dreams reality. And less than 7 years after Kennedy's speech, the entire world watched humanity left its first footprints on those further shores. It inspired a generation, and it spurred much of the technology advancement which now enriches our daily lives.

Today, our world once more stands at the cusp of breakthroughs and possibilities that have never before even been dreamt of. And Canada and the United States are leading and will continue to lead the way.

In just a few days—[*applause*]. In just a few days, NASA is going to announce an international team of astronauts who will crew the *Artemis II* mission. The first human voyage to the Moon since the *Apollo* mission ended more than 50 years ago will consist of three Americans and one Canadian.

We choose to return to the Moon together. Together, we'll return to the Moon. And from there, we look forward to Mars and to the limitless possibilities that lie beyond.

And here on Earth, our children who watch that flight are going to learn the names of those new pioneers. They'll be the ones who carry us into the future we hope to build. The *Artemis* generation.

Ladies and gentlemen, we're living in an age of possibilities. Xi Jinping asked me, in the Tibetan Plateau, could I define America. And I could have said the same thing if he asked about Canada. I said, "Yes. One word—and I mean it. One word: possibilities." Nothing is beyond our capacity. We can do anything. We have to never forget. We must never doubt our capacity.

Canada and the United States can do big things. We stand together, do them together, rise together. We're going to write the future together, I promise you.

God bless you all, and may God protect our troops. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:16 p.m. in the House of Commons Chamber. In his remarks, he referred to Speaker of the Canadian House of Commons Anthony Rota; Speaker of the Canadian Senate George J. Furey; Sophie Grégoire-Trudeau wife of Prime Minister Justin P.J. Trudeau of Canada; Molega Lake, Canada, resident Natalia Antoniak; President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia; Canadian citizens Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor, who were detained by Chinese authorities from 2018 to 2021; and President Xi Jinping of China.

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